

Matthew, Week 9

Chapter 3: The “John the Baptist Experience,” Part 4

CONVICTION!

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Finest of the Wheat Teaching Fellowship

I. **Discipleship Focus:**

True followers of Jesus are *true followers* in part because they have been deeply convicted of sin, have confessed their sins (and sinfulness), have repented of sin, and have put sin behind them. Without true, deep, conviction from the Holy Spirit, 90% of the “‘decisions’ for Christ” become inoculated against the Gospel.

II. **How Did God Use John the Baptist to Bring about Repentance? Conviction!**

A. What is CONVICTION?

1. Greek: convict = ἐλέγχω (el-ENK-oh): cross-examine, expose, bring to light, convince, reprove, correct, censure; conviction = ἔλεγχος (EL-enk-kos) = proof, conviction, reproof, censure, correction.
2. “To show people their sins and summon them to repentance.” (Kittel)
3. “...that state of mind and heart when the individual takes sides with God against himself.” (Reidhead)
4. “...an action of the Holy Spirit that brings about a profound sense of guilt before God.” (J. Rodman Williams)

B. Conviction is a work of the Holy Spirit (John 16:7-11)

1. The language is from the courtroom
 - a) *Parakletos* – a legal advocate; one who stands alongside in court.
 - b) *Elenchos* – conviction
 - c) Judgment
 - d) (By implication) Law

III. **The Tools of the Holy Spirit in Conviction—the Law and Conscience**

A. 1 John 3:4 — God defines sin as:

1. The transgression of the Law (KJV)
2. Sin is lawlessness (ἀνομία - ah-no-ME-ah) = “a” (without) + “nomos” (law)

B. “By the law is the knowledge of sin” (Romans 3:20); Phillips: “...it is the straightedge of the Law that shows us how crooked we are.”

1. The Law exposes sin — Romans 7:7ff
2. Apart from the Law, sin is dead (v. 8).

C. The Law is an essential part of the Gospel.

1. It is “holy and righteous and good” (v. 12) and “spiritual” (v. 14).
2. The Law is “good” if used “lawfully” because it is specifically made for sinners. See 1 Timothy 1:5-11.

D. In one sense, the Law — IN THE HEART — is the goal of the New Covenant. See Jeremiah 31:31-34.

E. Conscience

1. The work of the Law written on their hearts, their consciences bearing witness... (Romans 2:15)
2. Convicted by *conscience* (John 8:9)
3. The goal of our instruction (1 Timothy 1:5)
4. Damaged consciences:
 - a) Titus 1:5 — defiled
 - b) 1 Timothy 4:2 — seared with a hot iron

Be patient! Don't be in a hurry to be more “merciful” than God when someone is under conviction. Don't run ahead of God and spoil the Spirit's work.

IV. Examples of Jesus using the Law in evangelism

A. Woman at the well (John 4)

B. Rich young ruler (Matthew 19:16ff; Mark 10:17ff; Luke 18:18ff)

C. “You have heard it said... but I say unto you...” Matthew 5

Billy Graham: “The Ten Commandments form the backbone of the law. They are a giant x-ray machine to reveal the bone structure of our sinfulness.”

Also, be certain to read the article entitled *That Uncomfortable Word—Conviction!* at http://www.finestofthewheat.org/Jim_Kerwin/Conviction.php.